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PROGRAM The Today Show

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CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Accused Spies Met Soviets in Vienna

BOB JAMIESON: A jury is expected to be seated today in the spy trial of Ronald Pelton in Baltimore. Pelton is only the latest in a line of accused spies said to have been able to meet Russians openly in Vienna, Austria without the CIA knowing what's going on.

James Polk reports from Baltimore.

JAMES POLK: For spies with secrets for sale, Vienna is the clandestine crossroads where West meets East, all too easily.

Ronald Pelton, now on trial for selling out the National Security Agency, met his Russian KGB contacts in Vienna, even staying in the Soviet Ambassador's private apartment.

Navy turncoat traveled to Vienna time and time again. He kept this map with markings for Vienna meetings.

Ex-CIA employee Edward Howard made his contacts in Austria.

And with all these meetings, at least half a dozen in the last three years, one U.S. Senator calls it remarkable that the CIA has not detected a single one.

A former CIA official:

GEORGE CARVER: Austria is a sovereign country, and American intelligence and security services can't run around loose in the breeze doing whatever they want to do.


POLK: Former agents say there are too many American

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tourists to keep track of everybody.

For the Russians, Austria has become a free trade zone for meeting American defectors.

 JOHN GREANEY: They can put them into a situation and analyze and debrief them and train them and they do anything they want to with no interference whatsoever.

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POLK: One Senator said, with tongue in cheek, "The U.S. Government should set up its own travel agency for spies, if that's the only way the CIA can keep track of what it is losing in Vienna."